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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Conor Murphy (Ireland), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.39

Observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 43/195 of 20 December 1988, 44/212 of 22 December 1989, 45/213 of 21 December 1990, 46/141 of 17 December 1991, 47/197 of 22 December 1992, 48/184 of 21 December 1993 and 49/110 of 19 December 1994, all related to international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries,

Recalling its resolution 48/183 of 21 December 1993, in which it proclaimed 1996 the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty,

Recalling also its resolution 49/110 of 19 December 1994, in which it requested that a draft programme on the preparations for and observance of the Year be elaborated at an early date,

Emphasizing the necessity that Governments focus their efforts and policies on addressing the root causes of poverty and providing for the basic needs of all,

Recognizing that the eradication of poverty requires ensuring universal access to economic opportunities that will promote sustainable livelihood and making basic efforts to facilitate access to opportunities and services for the disadvantaged, and that people living in poverty and vulnerable groups must be empowered through organization and social life, in particular in the planning and implementation of policies that affect them, thus enabling them to become genuine partners in development,

Also recognizing that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people, and that equitable social development, which empowers people living in poverty to utilize environmental resources sustainably, is a necessary foundation for sustainable development,

Stressing the necessity to promote and implement policies to create a supportive external economic environment, through, inter alia, cooperation in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policies, trade liberalization, mobilization and/or the provision of new and additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable and mobilized in a way that maximizes the availability of such resources for sustainable development, using all available funding sources and mechanisms, enhanced financial stability, and ensuring increased access of developing countries to global markets, productive investments and technologies, and appropriate knowledge,

Also stressing that the United Nations system should play a central role in enhancing support and assistance for developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries, in their efforts to achieve the objectives set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, 1/ as well as in the major United Nations conferences organized since 1990 towards the eradication of poverty,

Emphasizing that empowering women will be a critical factor in the eradication of poverty, since women constitute a majority of people living in poverty, and since they contribute to the economy and to combating poverty through both their remunerated and their unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace,

Considering that the international community at the highest political level has already reached a consensus and committed itself to the eradication of poverty in recent major United Nations conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and in particular the World Summit for Social Development, which addressed the eradication of poverty as one of its three major themes, as well as the expected contributions from the forthcoming second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the UNCTAD (IX) and the World Food Summit,

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1/ A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

Noting the importance attached at the Halifax Summit of the Group of Seven most industrialized countries in considering measures towards the eradication of poverty,

Bearing in mind that Governments decided to adopt the appropriate measures and mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, with the assistance, upon request, of the specialized agencies, programmes, funds and regional commissions of the United Nations system, with broad participation of all sectors of civil society,

Recalling the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, in particular paragraph 95 (c) of the Programme of Action, in which it is recommended that the General Assembly, at its fiftieth session, declare the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, following the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996), with a view to considering further initiatives on the eradication of poverty,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General on the draft programme for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty 2/ and on international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries, 3/

Taking note of the Secretary-General's proposal in response to resolution 49/110 of 19 December 1994, that the theme of the international year for the eradication of poverty be "Poverty can be and must be eradicated throughout the World".

A. Observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996)

1. Urges all Governments, the international community, including the United Nations system, and all other actors in society to pursue seriously the objective of the eradication of poverty within the context of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996);

2. Reaffirms that the activities for the observance of the Year shall be undertaken at all levels, and that assistance should be provided by the United Nations system with a view to creating among States, policy makers and international public opinion a greater awareness of the fact that the eradication of poverty is both a complex and multidimensional problem, and is fundamental to reinforcing peace and achieving sustainable development;

3. Decides that the aim of the activities during the Year shall be to support a longer-term, sustained effort to implement fully and effectively the commitments, recommendations and measures undertaken and the basic provisions already agreed upon at major United Nations conferences since 1990, in

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2/ A/50/551.

3/ A/50/396.

particular the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women; 1/

4. Also decides that, in order to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty, activities during the Year, at all levels, shall be guided, inter alia, by the following principles:

(a) A sustained, collective commitment and effort shall be mounted by Governments, local administrations, all relevant actors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, business and corporations, supported by the international community, including the United Nations system and relevant subregional, regional and other international organizations, and anti-poverty strategies and programmes shall be designed, implemented and monitored with the full and effective participation of people living in poverty;

(b) Measures shall be adopted to ensure that people living in poverty have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to escape from poverty, and policies shall be adopted to ensure that all people have adequate economic and social protection during unemployment, ill health, maternity, child-rearing widowhood, disability and old age;

(c) Access of all people living in poverty to basic social services shall be ensured, as well as their participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of society;

(d) Women shall be given the economic and social opportunities to contribute to development, and anti-poverty strategies and programmes shall be designed with a gender dimension;

(e) Targeted programmes shall be developed to meet the special needs of particular social and demographic groups, including young people, disadvantaged older persons, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of persons;

(f) The international community shall provide continued and effective support to broad-based development in developing countries, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries;

(g) The efforts of the United Nations system to achieve the overall goal of eradicating poverty should be well coordinated in order to ensure that activities of relevant organizations are complementary and cost-effective;

5. Recommends that all States, as set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, undertake the following, preferably by 1996:

(a) Develop a precise definition and assessment of absolute poverty;

(b) Elaborate the measurements, criteria and indicators for determining the extent and distribution of absolute poverty;

(c) Formulate or strengthen, as a matter of urgency, national policies and strategies geared to substantially reducing overall poverty in the shortest possible time, reducing inequalities, and eradicating absolute poverty by a target date to be specified by each country in its national context;

(d) Increase public efforts to eradicate absolute poverty and to reduce overall poverty substantially by, inter alia, formulating or strengthening and implementing national poverty eradication plans to address the structural causes of poverty, encompassing action on the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels;

(e) Attach particular attention, in the context of national plans, to employment creation as a means of eradicating poverty, while also giving appropriate consideration to health and education, assigning a higher priority to basic social services, generating household income, and promoting access to productive assets and economic opportunities;

6. Urges Governments to review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women living in poverty, in particular in rural areas, as set out in paragraph 58 of the Beijing Platform of Action 4/ adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women;

7. Reaffirms the agreement to a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes;

8. Stresses that, during the Year and beyond, people living in poverty and their organizations should be empowered by involving them fully in the setting of targets and in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of national strategies and programmes for the eradication of poverty and the development of community bases, ensuring that such programmes reflect their priorities;

9. Takes note of the activities for the observance of the Year planned by the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General, 2/ and invites them to take further initiatives;

10. Urges all multilateral financial and development institutions to intensify and accelerate their investments in social sectors and poverty eradication programmes;

11. Takes note of decision 95/22 of the Executive Board of United Nations Development Programme, in which the Board decided to give poverty elimination the overriding priority in Programme activities, and to concentrate its programmes on the most needy regions and countries, in particular the least developed countries, especially in Africa;

4/ See A/CONF.177/20.

12. Invites all relevant specialized agencies, funds, programmes and related organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen and adjust their activities, programmes and strategies, as appropriate, in order to achieve the overall goal of eradicating poverty and meeting the basic human needs of all;

13. Welcomes the recent decision taken by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to establish task forces on different aspects of the follow-up to United Nations major conferences with a view to considering issues related to the eradication of poverty;

14. Takes note of the decision taken by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to establish an eradication of poverty fund for the duration of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in order to help developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, in the elaboration of national plans during 1996 to combat poverty;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to take all relevant measures to arrange for the wide and effective dissemination of the present resolution and the programme for the observance of the Year, and in this regard invites all States, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant international organizations, concerned national organizations, non-governmental organizations and other interested groups of civil society to give the necessary attention to the observance of the Year;

B. First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

16. Proclaims the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006);

17. Urges all Governments and the international community, including the United Nations system, and all other actors in society to pursue seriously the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences related to the eradication of poverty, in particular the World Summit for Social Development;

18. Welcomes the arrangements, within the agreed appropriation level for the 1996-1997 biennium, made by the Secretary-General regarding the entity, within the Secretariat required to undertake the functions needed in support of the system-wide implementation of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, including activities of the Decade;

19. Also requests the Secretary-General to invite those organs, organizations, programmes, funds and bodies of the United Nations system that have not already done so to consider the establishment of focal points and other similar mechanisms so that they may effectively implement the provisions, agreements and outcomes of major United Nations conferences relevant to the eradication of poverty;

20. Recalls the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council in the activities of the United Nations system towards eradication of poverty in the context of the coordinated follow-up of the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits organized since 1990 in the economic, social and related fields;

21. Stresses the importance of ensuring, at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels, coherent, comprehensive and integrated activities for the Year and Decade, according to the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits organized since 1990 in the economic, social and related fields;

22. Invites the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure, in particular through the inter-agency task forces, the involvement and coordination of all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system for a full and effective implementation of the present resolution and to submit to the General Assembly, at its fifty-first session, through the Council, reports on activities envisaged in support of the Decade, taking into account the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits organized since 1990 in the economic, social and related fields;

23. Calls upon States, the United Nations system, relevant international organizations and all other actors concerned with the Decade to participate actively in the financial and technical support of the Decade, in particular with a view to translating all measures and recommendations into operational and concrete poverty eradication programmes and activities;

24. Decides that the trust fund of the World Summit for Social Development established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/92 to finance preparatory activities be continued and renamed the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, under the authority of the Secretary-General, with the aim of supporting programmes, seminars and activities for the promotion of social development in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, which include activities of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and invites all States to contribute to the Fund;

25. Requests, therefore, that the Secretary-General ensure that the outcomes of major United Nations conferences are disseminated as widely as possible, and also to ensure that the documents related to the Year and the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, once adopted, be transmitted to all States, relevant international and regional organizations, multilateral financial institutions and regional development banks in order to secure their active and substantial contributions;

26. Recommends that donor countries give greater priority towards the eradication of poverty in their assistance programmes and budgets, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis;

27. Encourages developing countries to mobilize domestic and external resources for poverty eradication programmes and activities, and to facilitate their full and effective implementation;

28. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, in one document, a progress report on action taken by the United Nations system to implement the programme for the observance of the Year and action envisaged to be taken in preparation for the Decade;

29. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session an item entitled "First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)".